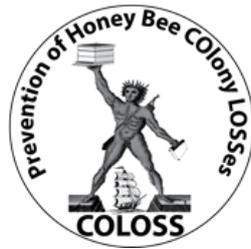


PRESS RELEASE

from COLOSS



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[Immediate: 13/2/14]

Scientists meet to develop plans to help honey bees.

At meetings held in Graz, Austria, international scientists from the honey bee research association COLOSS met to discuss two key areas of work that will aid our understanding of honey bees and the factors that affect their wellbeing. These are the monitoring of beekeepers' colony losses, and an innovative Citizen Science project to explore the diversity of food sources available to bees.

A total of 35 scientists representing 18 different countries attended the meeting, which was supported by COLOSS, University of Graz, the Dean of the Faculty of Science and the Austrian Research Association. They discussed the development of the ongoing project to monitor international honey bee colony losses. A major achievement of COLOSS has been the development of a standardised questionnaire for beekeepers, details of which have already been published in the ground breaking COLOSS *BEEBOOK*, the definitive guide to carrying out research involving honey bees. A jointly authored publication on colony losses over the winter of 2012-2013 which is to appear shortly was welcomed by the participants of the meeting. One possible factor that has been identified from analysis of these results is a link between high colony losses and bees situated in intensive agricultural areas with a low diversity of food sources.

Pollen is the only source of food protein for honey bee colonies and is needed to feed brood, for the development of adult bees and the build-up long lived winter bees. Little information is currently available about the diversity of food sources in different areas. One means to study the biodiversity of pollen available to honey bees, however, is through utilising the beekeepers themselves as Citizen Scientists (C.S.). As part of the new COLOSS C.S.I. Pollen project, beekeepers will be invited to participate by fitting pollen traps to several of their hives and estimating the diversity by counting the numbers of colours present in the sample. National coordinators from 16 countries agreed to conduct a common investigation in 2014 and 2015 using techniques trialled in pilot studies during 2013.

To coincide with the meetings, the new COLOSS website <http://www.coloss.org/> has been launched today.

COLOSS President Prof. Peter Neumann said: *"The COLOSS association is a dynamic international initiative, and I welcome these new developments which will aid our understanding of the factors which have contributed to the worldwide crisis with our bees and hence the pollination of food crops"*.

[Ends]

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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NOTES FOR EDITORS:-

1. COLOSS is a honey bee research association formerly funded by the European Union COST Programme (Action FA0803) and currently by the Ricola Foundation – Nature & Culture, which aims to explain and prevent massive honey bee colony losses. COLOSS does not directly support science, but aims to coordinate international research activities across Europe and worldwide, promoting cooperative approaches and a research programme with a strong focus on the transfer of science into beekeeping practice. COLOSS has more than 300 members drawn from 63 countries worldwide. Its President is Prof. Peter Neumann of the University of Bern, Switzerland. Website <http://www.coloss.org/>

2. The honey bee colony monitoring papers will be published in the *Journal of Apicultural Research*:-
<http://www.ibra.org.uk/categories/jar>

3. The COLOSS *BEEBOOK* - Volumes 1 and 2 are available online at:-
<http://www.ibra.org.uk/articles/The-COLOSS-BEEBOOK>

4. The COLOSS *BEEBOOK* - Volumes 1 and 2 are available as hard copies from:-
[http://ibrastore.org.uk/index.php?](http://ibrastore.org.uk/index.php?main_page=advanced_search_result&search_in_description=1&keyword=beebook)

[main_page=advanced_search_result&search_in_description=1&keyword=beebook](http://ibrastore.org.uk/index.php?main_page=advanced_search_result&search_in_description=1&keyword=beebook)



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